Winter Worker Injury Prevention: Complexity or Common Sense?

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THE FOLLOWING PREVIEW HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR APPROPRIATE AUDIENCES

By Mow Beta! Mowing & Snowplowing

Note: Select images in this presentation may be disturbing to some audiences.
Learning Objectives

1. List 3 types of serious hazards faced by snow removal workers

2. State an important preliminary step in injury prevention

3. Discuss the importance of work flow organization
Overview

I. Snow & Ice Industry Hazards

II. People, Problems, Personalities, & Pain

III. Risk Aversion & Accident Avoidance… or is it Luck?

IV. Steps in Injury Prevention

V. The Relevance of Workflow Organization in Dodging Injury
Snow & Ice Industry Hazards

- Strong winds
- Slippery surfaces
- Bitter cold
- Shoveling of snow
- Outdoor power equipment
- Working at heights
- Extended workhours
- The driving public
- Lack of sleep

- Stimulant overindulgence
- Inappropriate work clothing
- Inexperience
- Poor equipment maintenance
- Weather unpredictability
- Night-time work environments
- Unseen hazards under snow
- Apathy
- Alcohol & drugs
People, Problems, Personalities & Pain
IT'S SNOWING!

IT'S SNOWING!

IT'S SNOWING!

IT'S...

COLD

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Risk Aversion & Accident Avoidance…

…and is it Luck?
Different levels of risk tolerance

A person who is NOT Risk-Averse
Steps in Injury Prevention

- Use PPE, incl. right clothing
- Snow shoveler → medically fit
- Stay well-hydrated & avoid stimulants
- Take regular breaks
- Avoid walking on rooftops, or use appropriate safety equipment
- Mark skylights or other hazards hidden by snow
- Protect people on the ground
- Stay away from power lines
- Keep equipment well-maintained
- Carry emergency kit in vehicle
- Communicate with team
- Share lessons learned
- Safe equipment operation
- No horseplay on the job
- Watch for & avoid cold stress
Safe Equipment Operation:
Snowblower Safety

- Watch people and pets
- Avoid clogs
- No loose clothing
- Wear PPE
- When to refuel
- No enclosed areas
- When to clear a clog
- How to clear a clog
People keep sticking their hands in snow blowers without turning them off first, data show

1982, Christmas Eve Snowstorm... Denver Emergency Rooms treated 15 finger amputations related to snow blowers
Turn off. Count your fingers.

Watch those fingers
Estimated counts of snowblower-related amputations (fingers, mostly), 2003 to 2013

Source: National Electronic Injury Surveillance System

WASHINGTOONPOST.COM/WONKBLOG
Typical snowblower amputation victim

Age: 
Affected hand: 
Snow type: Heavy, wet 
Usual temp: 28 F or more 
Finger re-attachable? 

Gender: 
Affected finger: 
Snow depth: 6 inches or more 
Number of fingers: Often more
No Horseplay on the Job

Why?

* Lose focus on your work
* Distract others, which may lead them into danger
* Throwing tools can cause injury
* Inappropriate tool use can lead to death
No Horseplay on the Job: Air Compressor Quiz

Q: How much psi can dislodge an eye from its socket?

Q: How much psi causes an eardrum to rupture?

Q: How much psi causes intestinal perforation in a human?

Q: How much psi is produced by an industrial air compressor?
“Cat Scratch Colon”

Tears inside sigmoid colon & rectum caused by 1-second aim of compressed air during horseplay in shop
Watch for & Avoid Cold Stress

- The right clothing at the right time
- Monitor & anticipate weather changes
- Consider predisposing conditions of worker
- Use advance tailgate training
- Use the ‘buddy system’ – watch out for each other
Avoid Cold Stress: Trench Foot
The Relevance of Workflow Organization in Dodging Injury
Worker safety and health

- Priority Customers
- Bad forecast
- Work process management
- Vehicle repairs
- Trainees
- Sick call-ins
- Agency help
- Human resource practices
- Market characteristics
- Equipment loans
- High insurance
- Under-bidders
- Low-salt diet

Source: CDC National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
Summary

- **Industry Hazards**
  --face effectively
- **Dealing with People, Problems, Personalities & Pain:**
  --Planning, Promoting, Preventing, & Preparing
- **Risk Aversion & Accident Avoidance**
  --it’s a good thing!
- **Injury Prevention**
  --Control what you can, & share the knowledge
- **Workflow Organization**
  --Complexity and common sense
CAN'T WAIT FOR WINTER THEY SAID

IT'LL BE FUN THEY SAID
References


References


